EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2005 Tuolumne-Calaveras Unit Pre-Fire Management Plan is a comprehensive plan that combines all the Unit's pre-fire components into one document. It includes: the Tuolumne-Calaveras Unit's (TCU) concept of the Pre-Fire Management Plan; a current description of TCU; a discussion of the stakeholders, fuels, weather, level of service (LOS) and assets at risk in TCU; the Unit-wide and Battalion Pre-Fire Management Plans; and a discussion of the institutional issues related to implementation of the Unit Pre-Fire Management Plan. This plan addresses how Unit staff are trying to mitigate the wildland fire hazard and ignition problem in the Unit. The 2005 Tuolumne-Calaveras Unit Pre-Fire Management Plan will serve as the CWPP for all communities in Calaveras County. TCU staff worked closely with the Calaveras Foothills Fire Safe Council in preparing this year's plan to ensure it met the local needs and desires. All of the fire districts in the county have been solicited for their input into the plan as well. Where the data was available, projects of all cooperators was incorporated into the plan.

As determined by all stakeholders in the Unit, the key priority of pre-fire management activities is to protect the communities from damage and loss due to wildfires. Other key assets identified include water supply, recreation, hydro power, timber, ranching, tourism, wine production, small and large businesses, and many more. The main tools used to achieve the goals of protecting these assets are: educate the public on how they can make their homes and property more fire safe; reduce the hazardous wildland fuels in and around the communities; determine the cause of all fires in order to find measures that can reduce the number of fire starts in each cause category; educate government officials (federal, state and local) of the wildfire hazards within their jurisdictions to make them aware of the existing hazards and the benefits of pre-fire management activities (seek leadership, funding, policy/law changes, etc.); and educate all government agencies and the public on what they can do when wildfires threaten homes and communities in the Unit.

The 2004 fire season was very destructive with slightly below average ignitions, but above average values lost. There were over $10 million in damages with 26 homes lost. There were 380 fires in the Unit in 2004 compared to the five-year average of 386. Acres burned were 7,796, which compare to a five-year average of 8,926. During the 2001 season 30,137 acres burned and only 884 acres during the 2002 season.

There were three large and damaging fires in 2004. They were the Copperopolis Fire which burned 3,444 acres and destroyed one home, the Armstrong Complex which burned 963 acres and destroyed three homes, and the Pattison Fire which burned 2,676 acres and destroyed 17 homes. The leading cause of fires during the 2004 season was vehicle use followed by arson, equipment use, and miscellaneous causes. This mirrors

the 2003 season's causes. The cause of the Copperopolis Fire and the Pattison Fire was vehicle use. The Armstrong Complex was four related roadside arson fires.

Ignition management projects in 2004 focused on reduction of equipment caused fires, reduction of fireworks related incidents during the 4th of July period, close monitoring of arson fire activity, and tighter burn permit administration. Focus of the 2005 Ignition Management Plan will primarily be a continuation of the activities initiated in 2003/2004 to deal with equipment caused fires, arson fires, 4th of July fireworks activities, and burn permit escapes and violations.

In 2004, cooperative efforts with the Fire Safe Councils, interagency groups, citizens, and federal, state and local government agencies resulted in the completion of many pre-fire management projects including: clearance of heavy vegetation along roadway corridors in both counties; creation of yard debris disposal sites in both counties; yard waste chipper programs; grants provided funding to create fire safe clearance around homes of the elderly; evacuation plan maps and fire safe brochures provided to selected Tuolumne County communities; educating the public about the hazards of using equipment in wildland areas; CDF staff and Volunteers in Prevention (VIP) were used to patrol the unit on high fire hazard days for possible arson related activities and to educate the public on the safe use of equipment during fire season; reactivation of the Highway 108 Strategic Planning Group; continued success in the SWIFT area. Grants, agency funding, Sierra Pacific Industries (SPI) and individual citizens supported this work.

In 2005, TCU will continue working with their cooperators to develop pre-fire projects in many high hazard areas in the Unit. The projects range from fuels reduction to information/education type activities. Many of these projects will involve the continuation of efforts that were undertaken in 2004 or earlier. The details of these projects are outlined in the Unit-Wide, Battalion Plan and section of this document.

CDF fire crews continue to be a great asset in completing pre-fire projects. In 2004, Baseline Conservation Camp worked 48,462 man hours, Vallecito Conservation Camp worked 65,448 man hours and Sierra Training Center worked 229,500 man hours on fuels reduction projects. These figures emphasize the importance of the Camp Program's support of Fire Plan projects and their overall benefit to the citizens of California. Without CDF fire crews, much of the manual fuel reduction worked performed by CDF would not be accomplished.